No. 9

The REDEMPTION of Marie Gordon

THE TRAGIC STORY OF
WRONGED WOMANHOOD

Price 10¢

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"Now, don't be foolish," he warned. "I tell you that I can establish your innocence within an hour. I know the man who stabbed Burley to death."

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Cincinnati, Ohio.

MARIE had raised her head swiftly to silence the speaker. She knew only too well what Mr. Boswell inferred. He wanted to give her to understand that he had gained some power over her, and that his silence and continued good will could be bought for a certain consideration. She resented it with all her rebellious soul. She determined instantly not to give him a chance to discharge her. She meant to beat him to it.

"I know what you are going to say," she interrupted him fiercely, as she rose to her feet. "You think I am unfit to retain the position I hold. You are about to tell me that I am discharged. Well, I am ready to leave."

She made a quick move toward the door when Mr. Boswell stopped her.

"Wait — wait!" he cried. "You are wrong. "I don't want you to leave us. My wife has grown very fond of you. My little girl loves you."

"But I can not remain with you believing that I am guilty," she cried.

"And suppose you are guilty?" He laid a hand on her arm and looked deeply into her moist eyes. "I am not the one to condemn you. From the very beginning I have felt sorry for you, Marie. Let your husband divorce you.

"If he couldn't hold your affection it is probably his fault. If I had a wife as beautiful as you, I'd——"

"What would you do?" she broke in, her features aflame.

"I'd love her with all my heart and soul, Marie!" he cried. "I'd give her everything money could buy. I'd —I'd—oh, there isn't a thing I would not do for her. And I'd kill the man who came between us."

Marie saw the danger ahead. The expression in

the speaker's eyes, and his attitude, were sufficient warning.

"No, you are wrong," Mr. Boswell said, reading her thoughts. "I am not going to make love to you. I don't want to take advantage of your position. Some day—some day, I may tell you how I feel toward you. So far as the newspaper article is concerned, let's forget about it."

"But your—wife?" Marie faltered. "She might not——"

He waved her to silence.

"Mrs. Boswell rarely reads the newspapers," he declared. "You have nothing to fear there. And besides, I am the master of my house. No one, not even my wife can discharge you without my consent. She knows better than try to cross me, Marie."

Mr. Boswell spoke masterfully. He looked fully capable of carrying out any project no matter whom it involved.

"You are going to stay with us," he continued urgently. "You came here to see the plant. Well, let's go. Please forget this conversation between the two of us. Remember this: I am your loyal friend always. No matter which way the tide turns, I am backing you against the world."

It was a tremendous declaration to make. Marie could not help feeling just a little bit grateful.

But she felt also that sooner or later, if she accepted this man's protection, that she must pay the price.

He did not give her a chance to argue. With a gentle but firm hand, he guided her from the private office into the plant.

Like a boy delighted with his possessions, he explained to her the intricacies of the various machines. The plant was a marvel of modern equipment. The thou-

sands of men employed seemed to enjoy their work.

Surprise and admiration was depicted on their faces when they saw Mr. Boswell pilot a beautiful young woman.

Mr. Boswell did all the talking while Marie listened with growing interest.

They came to a long corridor which led to the drafting room. To the left was a door, on the frosted glass panel of which were the words: "Danger. Keep Out," in large black letters.

"That is the laboratory," he told her. "There are enough acids and nitro-glycerine in that room to blow this whole place to atoms. But it is most interesting to watch those chemists handle that stuff. They don't seem to realize that the slightest mistake means instant death to themselves and scores of others. Come, let's go in for a moment."

Marie followed Mr. Boswell. The room, large as it was, reminded her of a drugstore. Bottles and jars of all sizes were lined up on shelves, each one neatly labeled.

Perhaps a dozen men were busy, but they stopped long enough to glance at the owner of the plant, and look repeatedly at his lovely companion.

"They are experimenting now," Mr. Boswell explained, pointing to several elderly men busy mixing fluids from various bottles. "We are working on a new formula that will revolutionize the making of steel product. But it is a dangerous undertaking. I guess we better not stay in here very long."

Whether the sight of a beautiful woman like Marie disconcerted the chemists in the laboratory causing them to make a fatal mistake could not be ascertained.

But one of them did, and Hell broke loose.

There was a sudden puff of smoke, a warning cry, and then the very foundation of the building rocked with the explosion which took place.

Marie, blinded for a moment, groped helplessly about.

"Come quick!" It was Mr. Boswell's voice.

She felt a pair of arms about her. And she felt, too, as if she was being propelled through space with tremendous force. Another explosion came, and then a terrible silence.

Chapter 31

THE TEMPTER

BETTY HARDING languished in a prison cell, charged with the murder of Waterford Burley, the artist. At a preliminary hearing she was too dazed to give a clear account of the tragedy. When at last, driven to bay by the torturing questions and vile insinuations of the prosecuting attorney, she lapsed into stubborn silence, her attitude seemed to emphasize her guilt.

The people living in the same building in which Burley had his studio, testified that Betty had been a daily visitor.

One woman with a tendency to give the matter an ugly twist, testified that the artist and another man whom she did not know by name, had taken turns in being Betty's escorts when she went out.

Her story conveyed a broad hint to the effect that both of these men had been Betty's lovers.

The police assumed that she had killed Burley during a quarrel. This assumption was given impetus by the woman whose apartment was directly above the studio.

This woman told that she had heard loud voices, one of them very angry, then the scream of a woman. The officer who arrested Betty testified that he found her kneeling at the side of the murdered man and hearing her exclaim:

"Oh, I am so sorry this thing had to happen!"

Betty listened to all this without a murmur of protest. She was remanded to jail to await trial by jury.

Not until the door of her cell clanged shut behind her, did she begin to realize the horror of her position.

"I am innocent!" she screamed at the guard who locked her in. "Before God, I am innocent."

"That's what they all say," the guard retorted unfeelingly. "You'll have a chance to convince the jury when the trial comes up." Then he walked away, leaving Betty to her misery.

For hours she lay on the cot, her slender body convulsed with hysterical weeping. All through the night the tears flowed unabated.

When morning came, she was utterly exhausted. both physically and mentally. Ah, if she could only think of someone to help her in this hour of distress.

Pacing the floor, she tried to wrest her mind from a condition of chaos. Finally she was able to frame a clear thought.

To whom could she turn? She was an outcast from her own family. Of what use would it be to make an appeal to her father?

Instead of coming to her assistance he would most probably curse her for having dragged his name down into the very gutter.

It was late in the afternoon when she heard someone approaching her cell. But no, there must be two, for she distinctly heard two voices. One of them at least sounded familiar.

"Carlton — Carlton!" she cried when she saw McLain. "Oh, thank God you are here. You must help me, you must help me!"

Carlton McLain rushed forward and thrust a hand through the iron bars.

"Betty—Betty!" he exclaimed. "I can't bear to see you in a place like this." He felt her hot tears trickling on his outstretched hand, and gave an involuntary

shudder. "No, you must not cry, dear," he said gently. "I have come to get you out."

"Oh, thank God," she sobbed. "I knew you would not fail me."

The novelist glanced warily about. The guard had withdrawn and stood some little distance away in the corridor. In a few rapid strides he approached the man.

"This young woman is a close relative of mine," he lied as he produced a ten dollar bill. "I would like to talk to her for a few minutes without being disturbed. Isn't there a room you could let me have?"

"It is against the rules," said the guard, pocketing the money, "but I'll see what I can do for you."

He made a hurried trip to the chief jailer's office. When he returned he beckoned to McLain. They talked for a moment in whispers and another ten dollar bill changed hands.

"Alright," whispered the guard, "that will fix it. You can have fifteen minutes alone with the young woman. But I can not grant you any more time. And I'll have to remain close to prevent an attempt to escape. You know, the prisoner is charged with first degree murder."

"Don't worry about that," answered McLain quickly. "I'll be responsible for her."

Betty was released from her cell. She flew to McLain and clutched his arm. They were conducted to a room at the end of the corridor. The guard closed the door and waited outside.

The unhappy girl was too excited to observe strict propriety. She seemed still in a daze. So when the novelist took her in his arms, she raised no objection. She heard him as he talked in a low voice, but what he was saying she scarcely understood.

"Listen to me, Betty," he said, shaking her. "I know you did not kill Burley."

She stared at him, her eyes dilating.

"You—you know?" Then she broke into a fit of hysterical sobbing. "Oh, Carlton, you don't know how wretched I have been. Please take me from this horrible place. I'll go mad if I must go back to that dark cell."

For a moment he held her at arms' length, and gazed at her with a peculiar expression on his face.

"I can free you, and I will within an hour on one condition," he said slowly.

"What—what is that," Betty whispered.

"I love you—you know that," he replied. "You must have known it long ago. If you promise to leave this city with me to-night, I'll go at once to the prosecuting attorney's office and tell him who murdered Burley, because I know."

Betty knew only too well what this implied. For a moment her features turned crimson, then all the color fled, leaving them painfully white.

"What you suggest is an insult, Mr. McLain," she said, drawing away from him. "I prefer to stay in prison rather than accept your help under the condition you would impose. If that is all you have to say to me, please go."

The novelist smiled sardonically.

"I can't believe that you would throw away your only chance so lightly," he answered. "Unless I interfere, you are sure to be convicted. It will mean a life sentence, and perhaps the electric chair."

Betty uttered a low moan and covered her face with her hands. Her slender figure began to sway, and it seemed that she was about to fall.

McLain reached for her, but she cried out at his touch.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," Marie murmured, and turned pale. "I thought this taxi was vacant. I'll wait for the next one."

"Now don't be foolish," he warned. "I tell you that I can establish your innocence within an hour. I know the man who stabbed Burley to death. I am the only one who saw the assassin enter the studio. I saw him when he came out with a bloody stiletto in his hand."

A shudder ran over the girl's frame. And then she recovered her sense of reasoning.

"If you saw that," she said, her eyes flashing, "why did you permit them to arrest me? You could have prevented that. And yet you profess to love me."

"I do love you, dear," he asserted earnestly. "Please believe me when I say that. But certain circumstances made it inadvisable for me to interfere at that time . However, I am here now, ready to procure your release. Couldn't you make a little sacrifice for that?

"What I ask for is not such a terrible thing," he went on persuasively. "You claim to be married. Why did your husband forsake you and compel you to work for a living? Why isn't he here to defend and protect you? But what is marriage anyway? Only the mumbling of empty words. How many men and women keep the promises they make at the altar?"

Betty hung her head. What could she answer?

She could not satisfy McLain's curiosity without revealing the fact that her husband was an inmate of the State's prison. Pride and love sealed her lips.

She was about to speak when the guard knocked at the door.

"Time is up," he reminded them from without. "But I'll give you five more minutes."

"Please Betty, make up your mind," McLain urged anxiously. "What is it to be, a lifelong prison cell and perhaps the electric chair, or freedom and the lasting friendship of a man who loves you devotedly. I'll be good to you, dear." His voice trembled with emotion.

"I'll make this earth a paradise for you."

Betty, the woman would have accepted the easiest way, perhaps. But Betty, the loyal wife and prospective mother, rejected the novelist's proposal with sudden vehemence.

"No," she cried determinedly. "If I can obtain my freedom only at the sacrifice of my honor, I don't want it. But," she added tearfully, "you will regret this some day, Mr. McLain. You will regret having played the part of a despicable cad. God will punish you as you deserve to be punished. You know I am innocent and you will not speak without——"

At this point the door was opened and the guard entered.

"I am sorry," he said with an ingratiating grin. "Time is up and I must put the prisoner back in her cell."

McLain's hand went toward his pocket, evidently desiring to gain another concession by another bribe. But Betty was already on her way. She passed out of the door and walked on without looking back.

"Alright," the novelist muttered fiercely to himself. "If that is the way you feel about it, take your medicine."

As the days passed, Betty's spirits sank until she reached the lowest ebb of despondency. She had been informed that her trial would take place three weeks hence.

The thought of being confined for such a long time without knowing her ultimate fate was maddening. At first she rebelled against it, then cold despair settled up

on her.

Betty's case was pathetic. She was utterly alone. No one came to call, not even Carlton McLain, who evidently had abandoned her to her fate.

Finally she became the victim of acute melancholia.

She would sit for hours without moving? Tears? What was the use of shedding them? She grew cynical and hard. When the guard came to bring food, she refused to touch it. Her mental condition had become such that insanity threatened.

"I think that young woman is going dippy," the guard told the chief jailer one morning. "When I took her breakfast to her she laughed. And what a horrible laugh it was."

"I guess we better have a doctor look her over," said the jailer.

That afternoon Betty was brought before a physician, a specialist in mental diseases. It did not take him long to ascertain beyond doubt that the unfortunate young woman was suffering with temporary insanity.

Then the prosecuting attorney was called into a consultation. The mater was thoroughly discussed.

"To my mind it is criminal negligence to allow this woman to stay in that cell," the physician declared. "We might be able to save her reason now. But if she is compelled to stay where she is, she will be hopelessly insane in another month."

The prosecuting attorney was a humane man. He had no objection to the young prisoner being taken to a sanitorium. Accordingly Betty changed her place of abode.

She was put in the observation ward. Her condition seemed to improve for a few days, then she lapsed again into almost complete mental darkness.

Betty was a pitiful sight to behold. With her hair streaming down her face she walked the floor hour after hour, either sobbing or screaming at the top of her voice. Everything was tried to quiet her. Drugs failed.

"Take her out for a walk every day," the physician in charge suggested. "Perhaps that will help."

A kindly nurse undertook the task.

Betty seemed to enjoy the stroll through the grounds surrounding the institution. She brightened up perceptibly, but her mental condition as a whole would not improve.

She was absolutely harmless. Like a child of four, she clapped her hands delightedly at sight of the pretty flowers in the spacious beds.

It gave her great pleasure to be permitted to sit in the sun. She took the same route each day, and became so used to it that upon several occasions she strolled by herself.

No one had the least idea that Betty contemplated flight. But one evening it was discovered that she was missing.

A search was hastily instituted without result. The grounds were gone over from one end to the other. The surrounding country with its dense woods afforded many hiding places. A dozen men, accompanied by German police dogs, searched far and wide.

As a last resort two bloodhounds were sent for. They followed the scent to a little stream and lost it.

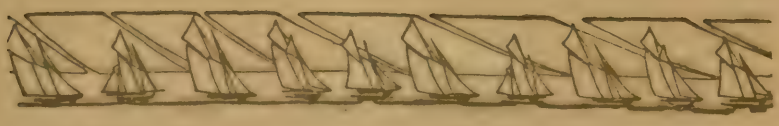
After a week of fruitless efforts, the authorities gave up the search. Betty had disappeared completely. But upon the prison register still remained her name thus: "Betty Harding, charged with first degree murder."

Whether or not Betty Harding effected her escape through a shrewd piece of acting, must remain an

open question. She surely did not show any sign of being even mildly demented when she walked into liberty late that sunny afternoon.

Nor did she seem unbalanced mentally when she walked boldly up to an isolated farm house along the road, where she asked for, and received shelter for the night.

And it was lucky for Betty that the farmer's wife happened to be one of those big-hearted, kindly women who are always willing to help a person in distress without asking questions.



Chapter 32

A CHANGED WOMAN

MANY disasters have occurred in munition plants and powder magazines, but not one ever equalled that which took place at the Gary steel mill works. The explosions, several in number, reduced a magnificent modern manufacturing structure to an immense heap of twisted steel and iron.

Hissing clouds of steam escaped from the wreckage, completely shutting it from view at times. What the loss of human lives would be, no one could guess.

With feverish energy, utterly oblivious to their own danger, scores of men commenced to attack the wreckage, tugging, lifting and tearing. They cursed and wept by turns. Some prayed as they worked.

But it seemed that ill fate had not yet completed its destruction. Suddenly, without warning, a mighty column of fire shot up toward heaven, accompanied by a thunderous crash.

Instantly there was a wild stampede for safety. Of the heroic men who had come to the rescue of their entombed and buried comrades, only a few escaped.

Several fire companies were already on their way to the scene of horror. The work of rescuing the unfortunates was renewed systematically.

There were heartrending cries and piteous sobbing as body after body was taken from the still smoldering ruins. Some of them were unrecognizable, which made identification impossible. All were laid in a row on the grass.

Frenzied women, some with children in their

arms, rushed along the silent line of bodies, shrieking, sobbing, and calling the names of husbands, brothers, sons or sweethearts. Here and there some woman could be seen falling to the ground in a swoon.

Others went into hysterics and frightful pandemonium reigned until the police succeeded in establishing a semblance of order.

Physicians, nurses and ambulance drivers performed record work in rendering first aid to the maimed and wounded. The hospitals were filled to capacity.

Several private homes threw open their doors so that all might be cared for.

Death had exacted a heavy toll. Over two hundred dead bodies were taken from the ruins, and with those who had lost their lives in the final explosion, the number of killed reached nearly three hundred

Many of the wounded and terribly mangled were not expected to live. Quite a few were still missing and unaccounted for.

With the first news of the disaster, Mrs. Boswell rushed back to see the great plant reduced to a gigantic heap of steel and brick. Sobbing aloud, she hastened through the crowd.

The people made way for her, but there was not one among them who could give a satisfactory answer to her hysterical question.

"Where is Mr. Boswell? Where is my husband?" she cried again and again.

Some distance away several men were just in the act of lifting an inert form into an ambulance. The unfortunate victim was still breathing.

"Do you know who that is?" one of them said.

The only reply forthcoming was a blank stare.

"That is the owner of the mill, Mr. Boswell," the speaker informed those about him.

Word was passed along quickly that Mr. Boswell had been found, and a moment later his wife and child were on the scene. Mrs. Boswell did not cry out. With little Muriel she went into the ambulance and accompanied her terribly injured husband to the hospital.

Physicians at once examined the owner of the plant, but it took quite a little while to ascertain the extent of his injuries.

Mrs. Boswell watched them, almost afraid to breathe.

"He has a chance," they told her finally. "But it is a slim one."

"Thank God for that," the wife murmured fervently. Then she pressed her youthful daughter to her heart and sobbed anew.

When one of the physicians suggested that Mr. Boswell be placed in the care of a special nurse, she objected.

"No," she said, "I am going to stay here and take care of him myself."

Little Muriel was sent home while her mother began playing the nurse. Within an hour Mr. Boswell recovered his senses. He looked up and smiled wanly when he saw his wife's face close to his.

"How do you feel, dear?" Mrs. Boswell inquired softly. "Do you suffer much pain?"

"My—my shoulders ache terribly," he replied in a whisper. "The rest of my body is numb. I can't feel a thing, and I can't move." He paused a moment, then asked "Have the found Miss Carey?"

Mrs. Boswell shook her head.

"I really don't know. But I'll have a thorough search made for her," she said. "I hope and pray that she is not among the killed."

As soon as the injured man closed his eyes in ap-

parent sleep, she tip-toed from the room. She gave orders that every effort be made to locate the governess either dead or alive.

However, this proved to be a hard task. Scores of young women employed in the offices were among the dead and injured.

Some of them lay in the hospital with mutilated faces and unconscious. Every attempt to identify these unfortunates failed.

Two days later Mr. Boswell was pronounced out of danger, due principally to the splendid work of several physicians and the loving care of his wife.

As soon as the Steel King was able to take charge of the situation, he placed half a million dollars at the disposal of a specially appointed committee.

"I want you men to do your best to bring what comfort you can to the widows and orphans," he told them. "Spare no expense."

But generous sums of money even in the time of dire need, could not bring back lost loved ones. Broken hearts could not be mended with dollars.

The genuine sympathy Mrs. Boswell carried personally into every home, did more to alleviate the prevailing sorrow than her husband's wealth.

In the meantime Marie Carey lay in one of the hospitals at the point of death. Her face had been horribly disfigured in the explosion. For days she remained unconscious.

When at last she came out of her long swoon, she prayed that she might die. She was suffering the most frightful physical agony.

But God, in His wisdom had decreed that she must live. And in His mercy he gave her strength to endure this torture.

No one knew who she was. She had been picked

Marie stepped behind some shrubbery and decided to play a watchful waiting game.

up and brought to the hospital with a number of other terribly injured young women.

A physician who had seen service in France during the World War, seemed to take a great deal of interest in Marie's case. He had won quite a reputation as a surgeon while in charge of a field hospital.

Many a soldier with part of his face shot away, left that hospital with features restored.

He had become a specialist in skin grafting, and his tremendous success was for a time the talk of the surgical world.

Dr. Bell saw a possibility of remodeling Marie's badly mangled face. He went to work with his usual skill and enthusiasm. The result was amazing. When the bandages were taken off they revealed features that were absolutely perfect.

They were more than that. They were the classic features of a Greek Goddess. But it was not the face of Marie Gordon. It was the face of a stranger.

There was, however, something unusual about Marie's condition. Somehow she could not come out of the stupor which clouded her mentality. And she had a constant desire for sleep.

One afternoon, as she succeeded in fighting off that persistent drowsiness she glanced about the room and noticed two nurses instead of one.

And they were engaged in an earnest conversation. For the most part their voices were toned down carefully so as not to wake the patient.

"I just wonder if she is the woman Mr. Boswell is so much concerned about," one of them was saying. "You know, they had a new governess by the name of Marie Carey. She happened to be in the plant when the explosion occurred."

"Was he here again to-day?" the other nurse in-

quired.

"Yes," came back. He makes his daily visit every morning. He surely is one fine man. Why, he is spending nearly a million to help those unfortunates who lost their loved ones. I understand he has offered five thousand dollars to the person who can give information that will lead to the finding of the governess."

The last sentence was greeted with a peculiar laugh.

"Rather a large sum to offer for a mere servant, don't you think?"

"Not at all," was the quick retort. "This Marie Carey was an unusually beautiful woman, and Mr. Boswell is very fond of beautiful women. I found out yesterday that she was in the plant with him. I would like to know what a governess who was hired to take care of children, does in a steel mill."

The answer to this insinuating remark was so low that Marie, listening intently, could not hear it. With her eyes closed she lay perfectly quiet.

Presently the two nurses, evidently taking it for granted that she was sound asleep, grew somewhat careless. Their voices grew louder, and they said things that were ugly.

Innuendos and veiled accusations were uttered which would not have found verbal expression had those two known that the woman concerned lay in the same room.

Marie continued to lay still. A flood of unpleasant emotions swept over her. How dared they couple her name with that of Mr. Boswell in such a shameless manner? She was tempted to let them know that she was awake and defend herself.

But upon second thought she decided to remain silent. So far as the outside world was concerned, she

was a stranger.

The physician had changed her features to such an extent that even her closest friends and relatives would not recognize her if they met her on the street.

If the world believed—as it obviously did—that she had been blown to atoms in the explosion, would it not be far better to remain a stranger? She had nothing in particular to live for. Only——!

A sudden halt was called in the mad racing of the unfortunate woman's thoughts.

It was true that she had lost her home, her husband and the respect of her many friends. But there were her two children. Had she not determined that she would fight for them?

That determination took a new hold of her. Now her mind became busy in another direction. She had called upon Mr. Shields to represent her when the divorce case came up for trial.

But what if the case had been settled during the time she lay in the hospital.

So far as she was able to figure out, she had been confined for over two months. It was quite possible that her husband had won the decree and also the custody of the children because of her failure to appear.

Marie became keenly alive. She coughed slightly to inform the two nurses that she was awake. One of them came over to her.

"Oh, how do you feel?" she asked not unkindly.

"Much better," Marie answered as she raised herself on one elbow.

"Ah, I am glad, and Dr. Bell will be delighted," the nurse said. "You don't know how deeply interested he is in your case. And he has made a changed woman out of you. I'll get a mirror and let you take a look at your face. It is simply wonderful since it healed so

nicely."

When Marie saw her reflection she gave a gasp. She was staring at an absolute stranger. She was not a vain woman, but she could not refrain from feeling some degree of satisfaction.

"Ah, it is wonderful," she breathed. "It is surely a miracle.

The nurse smiled broadly.

"Now will you tell us who you are?" she queried.

Marie shook her head.

"For certain reasons my identity must remain a secret," she responded. "Please do not insist upon having my——"

"It is perfectly alright with me," interrupted the nurse. "But Dr. Bell won't be put off so easily. And he has the backing of Mr. Boswell, who paid for the operation on your face."

"I shall reimburse Mr. Boswell gladly," said Marie calmly and with dignity. "And now will you do me a favor?"

"Certainly," came back promptly. "What is it?"

"Get me something to read. I prefer some Chicago newspapers," Marie replied. "And they don't have to be recent issues. Get me as many of them as you can, please."

An hour later Marie sat propped up with pillows and searching through a small stack of newspapers for the information she knew must be there.

And she found it!

The issue a little over a week old, carried the announcement that Philip Gordon, a prominent Chicago business man was pressing his suit for an absolute divorce from his wife, and that without a doubt, he would be granted the custody of his two children.

Cold despair gripped the poor woman's heart.

This news was the finishing touch to her misery.

"Oh, why couldn't I have died?" she wailed to herself. "What have I to live for now?"

But death is appalling to one so young and beautiful as Marie was. And the desire to see her two babies again grew to madness.

Driven by an inward restlessness, she made up her mind to leave the hospital at once. Why should she stay on? Her face had healed. She felt strong enough to endure any hardship.

The idea of returning to her position in the Boswell household she discarded at once. Existing circumstances sternly forbid it.

Evil gossips had already begun their work. She was afraid of the Steel King, and not without reason.

He had indicated plainly what she had to expect from him when he showed her the Chicago paper which held the announcement that her husband had instituted divorce proceedings.

That divorce would surely be granted. She would be a divorced woman. In the eyes of the world she was a dishonored woman. If she accepted Mr. Boswell's protection, she must pay for it—with her honor.

A mad resolution seized Marie. She wanted to get away.

Her unhappy mother heart craved but one thing. Ah, if she would be permitted to hold her two children to her bosom just once she would be satisfied to go to the uttermost end of the world and be forgotten.

How Marie left the hospital under the cover of darkness no one took the trouble to ascertain. When the nurse came in the following morning, carrying a delectable breakfast on a tray, the patient had gone.

Dr. Bell was bitterly disappointed. His feeling for the beautiful unknown woman was deeper than or-

dinary interest or mere professional activities.

She presented to him a mystery he was determined to solve. When he reported the flight of the woman to Mr. Boswell, the latter made known his displeasure by censoring the hospital management severely.

In the meantime Marie had arrived in Chicago. At the outset she had no definite plan except that she wanted to get near enough to the Gordon summer home to get a glimpse of her children.

She felt confident that with the help of Annie, the faithful nurse and loyal friend, she would be able to appease her heart hunger.

A peculiar incident occurred as she stood at the curb waiting for the taxi that was to take her to the Hotel Sherman, where she expected to stay for the present . It was an incident which provided a terrible shock for her

Not a single taxi which approached displayed the "Vacant" sign. Somewhat out of patience Marie was about to walk the distance to the hotel.

Just then a taxi came along. Marie saw the necessary sign and held up her hand.

The driver drew up to the curb with a pleasant grin. He was not in the habit of passing up a beautiful woman who wanted to ride with him.

In his eagerness to accommodate this one, he forgot that he already had a passenger. Moreover, he had forgotten to remove the "Vacant" sign, or Marie would certainly not have hailed him.

As she opened the door of the vehicle and was about to enter, she discovered to her dismay that a handsome young man occupied the rear seat.

And she discovered also, at the first glance, that this young man was none other than Tom Atkinson.

Of course, he did not recognize her with her feat-

ures changed so completely. He just stared and dropped the paper, he had been reading, on his knees.

'Oh, I beg your pardon," Marie murmured and turned pale. "I thought this taxi was vacant. I'll wait for the next one."

It seemed like a capricious turn of fate that Marie should meet Tom Atkinson at this particular time. It brought back some of the things she was trying to forget. It was this same Tom Atkinson who at one time had been one of her most devoted friends.

It was he who gave her such a pleasant reception that night she went to the Madison Country Club dance.

It was he who had played the informer to her husband. He had told Phil that he had seen her in Jack Hoover's arms on the train bound for Cincinnati. Ah. if he only knew what havoc he had wrought with that talegram sent in such haste and before knowing the true facts.

And yet Marie could not find it in her heart to hate this man. She even smiled a little as he said with utmost politeness:

"You may share this seat with me if you wish, madam."

"No, thank you," she replied, and drew back.

She saw the startled look on his face as he heard the sound of her voice. The next moment the taxi began to move and was soon out of sight.

Marie had been somewhat unnerved by the unexpected meeting with Tom Atkinson. But presently her mind became occupied again with thoughts of her children. A really empty taxi came along and she was whisked away.

She was anxious to get to the hotel so that she might find out something about them.

But keen disappointment awaited Marie. When

she called up her old home in a changed voice and tried to get some information, she was told that Philip had taken the children on an extended trip abroad. Annie had gone with them.

"Thank God, Annie is taking care of them," she murmured as she hung up the receiver. "She loves my babies, and they love her."

And now began the struggle for existence in a world that believed her dead. Marie fought hard to keep from sinking into the slough of despondency. At first she thought of going to California and join her aunt. But she abandoned the idea when she realized how great the distance was from Chicago.

She was anxious to remain close enough so she could be within reach of her little loved ones when they returned home from abroad.

Chapter 33

UNEXPECTED NEWS

ONE YEAR had passed since the events narrated in the foregone chapters. Milwaukee, made famous by a beverage imbibed freely and often before the Eighteenth Amendment became a law, is the favorite mecca for tourists traveling through the Middle West. Situated as it is, on beautiful Lake Michigan, its population may feel justly proud.

No other city can boast of lovelier suburbs. Palatial homes stand as a monument to architect's inventive genius. Landscape gardeners of proven ability and artistic endowment have surrounded these residences with parks delightful to the eye.

Mrs. Hargrave, a very wealthy and rather eccentric old widow, lived in an old mansion not far from the lake. Among her retinue of servants was a beautiful young woman who called herself Marie Desmond.

When she was engaged as a companion about eight months ago, she gave her home town as Chicago. She presented no written recommendations.

Neither had she given any person as reference. Mrs. Hargrave, who always prided herself upon her ability to read character and being a judge of human nature, was quite satisfied with the applicant's appearance, cultured manner of speech and evident refinement.

"I have never yet made a mistake in picking my servants," she used to say to her friends. "All I need is a thirty minute chat with an applicant for a position in my household."

That she made no mistake in the case of Marie

Desmond was proven again and again. The latter made an ideal companion. She read splendidly in a low, musical voice. She was an accomplished pianist.

She had wonderful tact when called upon to officiate at social functions. And last, and not least, she had the knack of making herself liked by everyone with whom she came in contact.

The other servants in the house idolized Miss Desmond. She solved for them many problems they hesitated to present to the eccentric and often disagreeable Mrs. Hargrave.

Marie Desmond was a sympathetic listener and a good adviser. And she was generous to a fault.

It is not frequent that a beautiful woman is really liked by her own sex. But Marie was. The women of Mrs. Hargrave's society circle accepted the old lady's companion like one of their own station.

They spoke of her in glowing terms of admiration and respect.

Some, who could see below the surface, were sure that Miss Desmond had a secret sorrow. They read hidden grief in the limpid pools of her eyes and the quivering lips.

The reader will recognize in this woman none other than Marie Gordon, the discarded wife of Philip Gordon. And the reader also knows what was responsible for the frequent tears in her eyes.

Only a few women would have cared to live on after the dreadful misfortune which had befallen Mrs. Gordon.

If ever a woman was the victim of an ill fate, Marie was that woman. Fate had dragged her from the exalted position of an honored and loved wife and mother to the level of an ordinary wanton.

But fate erred cruelly in branding Mrs. Gordon as

a woman of low moral character. There never had been an unclean thought or desire in her mind.

What few mistakes she made might have been speedily rectified had the truth been allowed to prevail.

She lived, hoping against hope, that some day, somewhere, somehow, she would see her two babies again.

So far as she knew they were still in Europe with their father. Within the past few weeks, however, she had not been able to get any reliable news.

It was one of Marie's habits to rise early every morning and take a long stroll toward the not too distant lake. The softly murmuring waves were soothing. The rising sun had a tendency to keep the fire of hope alive within her.

And so we see her, on this particular morning, a tall, slender young woman, leaning against a tree, gazing dreamily across the placid waters of Lake Michigan.

She enjoyed these hours of solitude and to be alone with her thoughts. She enjoyed dreaming of what once had been although it seemed that an eternity had passed since last she held her babies to her breast.

But to-day was to be a sorrowful one for Marie. It was little Harry's birthday. He would pass the sixth milestone of his young life, and she could not be with him to kiss and caress him.

Tears filled her eyes. They trickled down the smooth contour of her cheeks and dropped to the ground.

The longing in her soul increased until, succumbing to a wave of grief, she broke down completely and sobbed aloud. Nearly an hour passed, and the time had come when she must return to the Hargrave mansion.

The old lady insisted upon having her breakfast at eight o'clock, and Marie read the paper to her.

Continued in next number

Tell Your Own Fortune!

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Only these Cards and Nothing Else can be thy Savior

were his continual thoughts. Under the impulse of this inspiration he informed the chief of the magical power of these cards, which in possession of an enemy would cause dire disaster to his family as well as himself. Thoroughly frightened the chief gave this treasure to Korn and escorted him to the seacoast far from his place of captivity. After various wanderings and adventures he arrived at the German colony Kameron, where he secured a position on board a Hamburg merchant ship; and through these events we became possessed of the *Genuine Cards*, the handwritten interpretation and instructions how to use them.

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